IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT IN AND FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE

MICHELLE L. SMITH,)
Plaintiff))
v.)) C.A. No
)
SUSSEX CONSERVATION DISTRICT,)
KIP FOSKEY, INDIVIDUALLY AND IN)
HIS CAPACITY AS A SUPERVISOR FOR)
SUSSEX CONSERVATION DISTRICT)
AND DEBRA L. ABSHER,)
INDIVIDUALLY AND IN HER)
CAPACITYAS DISTRICT)
COORDINATOR FOR THE SUSSEX)
CONSERVATION DISTRICT)

Defendant.

NOTICE OF REMOVAL

Defendants the Sussex Conservation District (hereinafter, "the District"), Kip Foskey (hereinafter "Foskey"), and Debra L. Absher, (hereinafter "Absher"), collectively, hereinafter, the "Defendants," by and through their undersigned counsel, hereby give notice that this matter has been removed pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1441, to the United States District Court for the District of Delaware. The grounds for removal are as follows:

1. Plaintiff Michelle L. Smith ("Plaintiff") commenced this action, entitled Michelle L. Smith v. Sussex Conservation District, Kip Foskey, individually and in his capacity as a supervisor for the Sussex Conservation District, and Debra L. Absher, individually and in her capacity as District Coordinator for the Sussex Conservation District, Case No. 06C-10-039 RBY in the Superior Court of the State of Delaware in and for Kent County. On information and belief, the Verified Complaint ("Complaint") was filed on or about October 25, 2006.

- 2. Defendants first obtained a copy of Plaintiff's Complaint when it was served on December 4, 2006. A copy of the Complaint and Summons are attached as Exhibit 1.
- No further proceedings in this matter have been had in the Superior Court of the 3. State of Delaware in and for Kent County.
- This action includes a federal claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1982 and the Fourteenth 4. Amendment of the United States Constitution, conferring original jurisdiction upon this court of any civil action arising under the laws of the United States.
- Plaintiff alleges that she was discriminated against and denied equal protection 5. based on her sex (female).
- To the extent Plaintiff is asserting any claims under state law, this Court has 6. supplemental jurisdiction over said claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367.
- This Notice of Removal is being filed within 30 days of the Defendants' receipt of 7. the Complaint and is hereby timely filed uner 28 U.S.C. § 1446(b).
- Defendants have filed a true and correct copy of the Notice of Removal with the 8. Superior Court of the State of Delaware in and for Kent County. A copy of the Notice is attached hereto as Exhibit 2.

WHEREFORE. Defendants respectfully request that this action now pending against them in the Superior Court of the State of Delaware in and for Kent County, be removed therefrom to this Court and that this action be placed upon the docket of this Court for further proceedings, as though this action originally had been instituted in this Court.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG CONAWAY STARGATT & TAYLOR, LLP

Scott A. Holt, Esquire (No. 3399)

The Brandywine Building

1000 West Street, 17th Floor

P.O. Box 391

Wilmington, Delaware 19899-0391

Telephone: (302) 571-6623 Facsimile: (302) 576-3299 Email: sholt@ycst.com Attorney for Defendants

Dated: December 20, 2006

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE IN AND FOR KENT COUNTY

MICHELLE L. SMITH,

Plaintiff,

v.

SUSSEX CONSERVATION DISTRICT, KIP FOSKEY, individually, and in his capacity as a supervisor for the Sussex Conservation District, and DEBRA L. ABSHER, individually, and in her capacity as District Coordinator for the Sussex Conservation District,

Defendants.

C.A. No.

ARBITRATION CASE

TRIAL BY JURY DEMANDED

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COMPLAINT

- 1. Plaintiff Michelle L. Smith (hereinafter "Plaintiff") is a resident of the State of Delaware, residing at 4849 Arthursville Road, Hartly, Delaware, 19953.
- 2. Defendant Sussex Conservation District is a political subdivision of the State of Delaware, formed pursuant to 7 <u>Del. C</u>. § 3901 <u>et. seq</u>. Defendant's address is 408 North Dupont Highway, Suite B, Georgetown, Delaware 19947.
- 3. Defendant Kip Foskey is employed by Defendant Sussex Conservation District as a senior planner.
- 4. Defendant Debra Absher is employed by Defendant Sussex Conservation District as the District Coordinator.

- 5. Jurisdiction is conferred on this court by 19 Delaware Code §715.
- 6. Plaintiff brings this action to redress the wrongs done to her by Defendants' discrimination against her on the basis of her sex.
- 7. Plaintiff timely submitted a complaint of discrimination on the basis of sex and national origin with the Delaware Department of Labor ("DDOL") and the Equal Employment opportunity Commission ("EEOC").
- 8. Plaintiff has received a Notice of Right to Sue for the above-referenced charge from the DDOL.
- 9. Plaintiff has timely filed this Complaint within ninety (90) days of her receipt of the Notice of Right to Sue.
 - 10. Plaintiff is a female.
- 11. At all times relevant to this Complaint, Plaintiff was qualified for her job position and satisfactorily performed all duties of her job position.
- 12. On or about June 27, 2005, Plaintiff began her employment with the Sussex Conservation District. Plaintiff had recently graduated from Delaware Valley College with a degree in Agronomy and Environmental Science.
- 13. One of Plaintiff's supervisors at the Conservation District was Kip Foskey.
- 14. Soon after she began her employment at Defendant Sussex Conservation District, Plaintiff noticed Foskey "leering" at her and staring at her chest.
 - 15. Plaintiff also observed Foskey noticeably rubbing or

"adjusting" his genitals in front of Plaintiff. Foskey repeated the aforementioned behavior in Plaintiff's presence on numerous occasions thereafter.

- 16. On other occasions, Foskey would purposely "bump into" and make physical contact with Plaintiff when he was passing by her in the hallway.
- 17. Foskey also made frequent unsolicited comments about Plaintiff's appearance.
- 18. On August 18, 2005, Plaintiff met with Rich Kirschner to inform him of Foskey's inappropriate and sexually oriented behavior.
- 19. On or about August 26, 2005 Plaintiff met with Debra Absher, the District Coordinator for the Sussex Conservation District, to discuss Foskey's aforementioned behavior. Prior to this meeting on August 26, 2005, Plaintiff had complained directly to Absher of Foskey's inappropriate and sexually oriented behavior.
- 20. Rich Kirschner, another employee of the Sussex Conservation District, was also present at this meeting of August 26, 2005.
- 21. Ms. Absher's response to Plaintiff's complaints at the meeting on August 26, 2005 was that "Kip was harmless" and that he "only checked girls out when he was nervous." Ms. Absher also claimed that Foskey's behavior of "groping himself" was only a nervous habit. No official action was taken against Foskey after this meeting.
 - 22. On September 15, 2005, Plaintiff received a letter from

Defendant Debra Absher informing Plaintiff that her employment with the Sussex Conservation District was to be "terminated effective immediately." The letter Plaintiff received gave no explanation for Plaintiff's termination.

COUNT I

- 23. Plaintiff hereby restates and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 23 hereinabove.
- 24. By committing the aforementioned acts, Defendant has discriminated against Plaintiff with regard to the terms and conditions of her employment and terminated her employment on the basis of her sex in violation of 19 Del. C. §710 et. seq.
- 25. As a direct result of this unlawful discriminatory conduct of Defendant, Plaintiff has suffered damages, including but not limited to physical and emotional injury, pain and suffering, mental anguish, humiliation, and lost wages.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendant Sussex Conservation District for:

- (a) Back pay, including interest;
- (b) Reinstatement if feasible, or in the alternative, front pay;
- (c) Compensatory damages, including damages for emotional and physical pain and suffering, inconvenience, mental anguish, loss of enjoyment of life, and all other non-pecuniary losses;
 - (d) Punitive damages;
 - (e) Pre-judgment and post-judgment interest;

- (f) Attorney's fees; and
- (g) Any other relief that this court deems just.

COUNT II

- 26. Plaintiff hereby restates and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 27 hereinabove.
- 27. By committing the aforementioned acts, Defendant also violated 19 <u>Del. C. § 710</u>, <u>et. seq.</u> by retaliating against Plaintiff in response to her complaints of sexual harassment by terminating Plaintiff's employment.
- 28. As a direct result of this unlawful retaliatory conduct of Defendant, Plaintiff has suffered damages, including but not limited to physical and emotional injury, pain and suffering, mental anguish, humiliation, and lost wages.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendant Sussex Conversation District for:

- (a) Back pay, including interest;
- (b) Reinstatement if feasible, or in the alternative, front pay;
- (c) Compensatory damages, including damages for emotional and physical pain and suffering, inconvenience, mental anguish, loss of enjoyment of life, and all other non-pecuniary losses;
 - (d) Punitive damages;
 - (e) Pre-judgment and post-judgment interest;
 - (f) Attorney's fees; and
 - (g) Any other relief that this court deems just.

COUNT III

- 29. Plaintiff hereby restates and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 31 hereinabove.
- 30. Defendants, acting under color of state law, have deprived Plaintiff of the rights afforded her under the United States Constitution and federal law, in violation of 42 U.S.C. §1983. These rights include, but are not limited to, Plaintiff's rights to equal protection and due process of law pursuant to the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution.
- 31. Such violations of law happened in the context of a continuing, widespread, and persistent pattern of constitutional misconduct by Defendant Foskey and Defendant Absher, employees of said Defendant Sussex Conservation District, and with deliberate indifference to or tacit authorization of Defendant Foskey's and Defendant Absher's conduct by said Defendants' policy-making officials after notice to the officials of said misconduct.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendant Sussex Conservation District, Defendant Kip Foskey and Defendant Debra Absher, jointly and severally, for:

- (a) Back pay, including interest;
- (b) Compensatory damages, including damages for emotional and physical pain and suffering, inconvenience, mental anguish, loss of enjoyment of life, and all other non-pecuniary damages;
 - (c) Punitive damages;
 - (d) Pre-judgment and post-judgment interest;

- (e) Attorney's fees;
- (f) Reinstatement; and
- (g) Any other relief that this Court deems just.

COUNT IV

- 32. Plaintiff hereby restates and incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 34 hereinabove.
- 33. By their actions as described in this Complaint, including but not limited to, discriminating against Plaintiff and terminating Plaintiff for registering a complaint of sexual harassment, Defendant has breached the covenant of good faith and fair dealing implied under Delaware law.
- 34. Defendant's actions in breaching the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing were wilful and/or wanton.
- 35. As a direct result of the wrongful conduct of Defendant and its agents, Plaintiff has suffered damages, including but not limited to, physical and emotional injury, pain and suffering, mental anguish, humiliation, and lost wages.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff demands judgment against Defendant Sussex Conservation District:

- (a) Back pay, including interest;
- (b) Reinstatement, if feasible, or in the alternative, front pay;
 - (c) Punitive damages;
 - (d) Pre-judgment and post-judgment interest;
 - (e) Attorney's fees; and
 - (f) Any other relief that this Court deems just.

Respectfully submitted,

SCHMITTKINGER & RODRIGUEZ, P.A.

WIZLIAM D. FLETCHER, JR.

ESQUIRE

Bar JD7#362

NOEL E. PRIMOS,

Bar ID #3124

414 S. State Street

P.O. Box 497

Dover, DE 19903-0497

(302) 674-0140

Attorneys for Plaintiff

DATED: 10/25/06

Case 1:2002-00776-317-MPTaseDommonation stienteland/2000s) Page 1 of 1

COUNTY: N K S	CIVIL ACTION NUMBER: Octo-539 KD9
CIVIL CASE CODE: OTHR	CIVIL CASE TYPE: DISCRIMINATION
	EE REVERSE SIDE FOR CODE AND TYPE)
CAPTION:	NAME AND STATUS OF PARTY FILING DOCUMENT:
MICHELLE SMITH,	MICHELLE SMITH, Plaintiff
Plaintiff,	
<u>v.</u>	
	DOCUMENT TYPE: (E.G., COMPLAINT; ANSWER
SUSSEX CONSERVATION DISTRICT, KIP	WITH COUNTERCLAIM)
FOSKEY, individually, and DEBRA ABSHER,	
individually,	Complaint and Rolated Fleadings
	Non-Arbiration
Defendants.	(Cortificate of Value may be required)
	Arbitration _x_ Mediation Neutral Assessment
	DEFENDANT (CIRCLE ONE) ACCEPT REJECT
	JURY DEMAND YES * NO
	TRACK ABSIGNMENT REQUESTED (CIRCLE ONE)
	EXPEDITED STANDARD COMPLEX
ATTORNEY NAME(S);	IDENTIFY ANY RELATED CASES NOW PENDING IN THE
William D. Fletcher, Jr.	SUPERIOR COURT BY CAPTION AND CIVIL ACTION NUMBER
ATTORNEY ID (S): 362	INCLUDING JUDGE'S INITIALS
FIRM NAME:	
SCHMITTINGER & RODRIGUEZ, P.A.	Q. S ZA
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ADDRESS:	□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
	EXPLAIN THE RELATIONSHIP(S):
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P.O. BOX 497	
DOVER, DE 19903-0497	
MET SERVICE NUMBER .	
TELEPHONE NUMBER:	OTHER UNUSUAL ISSUES THAT AFFECT CASE MANAGEMENT:
302-674-0140	OTUBE ONOBONE TOOODS THAT NEEDEL CUSE ENGANGEMENT:
FAX NUMBER:	
302-674-1830	
E-MAIL ALDRESS:	(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED, PLEASE ATTACH PAGES)

THE PROTECNOTARY WILL NOT PROCESS THE COMPLAINT, ANSWER OR FIRST RESPONSIVE PLEADING IN THIS MAPTER FOR SERVICES UNTIL THE CASE INFORMATION STATEMENT (CIS) IS FILED. THE FALLURE TO FILE THE CIS AND TO HAVE THE PLEADING PROCESSED FOR SERVICE MAY RESULT IN THE DISMISSAL OF THE COMPLAINT OR MAY RESULT IN THE ANSWER OR FIRST RESPONSIVE PLEADING SERVICEM.

Exhibit 1

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE

IN AND FOR KENT COUNTY

MICHELLE L. SMITH,

Plaintiff,

v.

SUSSEX CONSERVATION DISTRICT, KIP FOSKEY, individually, and in his capacity as a supervisor for the Sussex Conservation District, and DEBRA L. ABSHER, individually, and in her capacity as District Coordinator for the Sussex Conservation District,

Defendants.

C.A. No.

ARBITRATION CASE

TRIAL BY JURY DEMANDED

served 12-4-06

FILED FILED

PRAECIPE

TO: PROTHONOTARY
Kent County Courthouse
The Green
Dover, DE 19901

Please docket the attached Complaint and Related Pleadings and issue Summons to the Sheriff of Sussex County to serve the same and copies of the attached Complaint and Related Pleadings, upon the following Defendants:

- 1. Defendant Sussex Conservation District by serving it's registered agent at 408 North Dupont Highway, Suite B, Georgetown, Delaware 19947;
- 2. Defendant Kip Foskey by serving him at his place of work, Sussex Conservation District, 408 North Dupont Highway, Suite B, Delaware 19947;
- Defendant Debra Asher by serving her at her place of work, Sussex Conservation District, 408 North Dupont Highway,

Suite B, Delaware 19947.

Enclosed is payment of costs for this matter.

SCHMITTANGER & RODRIGUEZ, P.A

WILLIAM D. FL.

Bar ID #362

414 S. State Street

P.O. Box 497

Dover, DE 19903-0497 Attorneys for Plaintiff

DATED: 10 25 06

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE

IN AND FOR KENT COUNTY

MICHELLE L. SMITH,

Plaintiff,

 ∇ .

SUSSEX CONSERVATION DISTRICT, KIP FOSKEY, individually, and in his capacity as a supervisor for the Sussex Conservation District, and DEBRA L. ABSHER, individually, and in her capacity as District Coordinator for the Sussex Conservation District,

Defendants.

C.A. No. 06C-(0-039 RBY

ARBITRATION CASE

TRIAL BY JURY DEMANDED

FECEIVED
AND
FILED
FOR OUT 25 PH 1: 23
FEED FOR OUT 25 PH 1: 23

SUMMONS

THE STATE OF DELAWARE,
TO THE SHERIFF OF SUSSEX COUNTY
YOU ARE COMMANDED:

To summon the above named defendant, Debra Absher, so that within 20 days after service hereof up Defendant, exclusive of the day of service, Defendant shall serve upon William D. Fletcher, Jr., Esquire, Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is 414 S. State Street, Dover, DE 19901, an answer to the Complaint (and, if an affidavit of demand has been filed, an affidavit of defense).

To serve upon Defendant, a copy hereof and of the Complaint (and of the affidavit of demand if any has been filed by Plaintiff).

Dated: 10-31-06

Lisa M. Robinson

Cosyan

Per peputy

TO THE ABOVE NAMED DEFENDANT:

In case of your failure, within 20 days after service hereof upon you, exclusive of the day of service, to serve on Plaintiff's attorney named above an Answer to the Complaint (and, if an affidavit of demand has been filed, an affidavit of defense), judgment by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint (or in the affidavit of demand, if any).

Lisa M. Robinson

A G & some

Per Deputy

Exhibit 2

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE IN AND FOR KENT COUNTY

MICHELLE L. SMITH,) C.A. No. 06c-10-039-RBY
Plaintiff,) Arbitration Case)
v.	,))
SUSSEX CONSERVATION DISTRICT, KIP FOSKEY, individually, and in his capacity as a supervisor for the Sussex Conservation District, and DEBRA L. ABSHER, individually, and in her capacity as District Coordinator for the Sussex Conservation District,)) TRIAL BY JURY DEMANDED))))))))))
Defendants.	,)

NOTICE OF REMOVAL

TO: PROTHONOTARY Kent County Courthouse The Green Dover, DE 19901

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that Defendants Sussex Conservation District, Kip Foskey and Debra L. Absher, have removed the captioned case to the United States District Court for the District of Delaware. A copy of the Notice of Removal filed with the United States District Court on December 20, 2006 is attached as Exhibit A. Service of this Notice effects removal; the federal statute requires that the State Court proceed no further unless and until the case is remanded. 28 U.S.C. § 1446(d); Resolution Trust Corp. v. Bayside Developers, 43 F.3d 1230, 1238 (4th Cir. 1994) ("Thus the clear language of the general removal statute provides that the state court loses jurisdiction upon the filing of the petition of removal.").

ŸOUNG CONAWAY STARGATT, & TAYLOR, LLP

Scott A. Holt, Esquire (No. 3399)

The Brandywine Building

1000 West Street, 17th Floor

P.O. Box 391

Wilmington, Delaware 19899-0391

Telephone: (302) 571-6623 Facsimile: (302) 576-3299 Email: sholt@ycst.com Attorney for Defendants

Dated: December 20, 2006

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Scott A. Holt, Esquire, hereby certify that on December 20, 2006, I caused two paper copies of the **Notice of Removal** and this certificate of service to be delivered via U.S. Mail to:

William D. Fletcher, Esquire Schmittinger & Rodriguez, P.A. 414 South State Street P.O. Box 497 Dover, DE 19903-0497

Scott A. Holt, Esquire (No. 3399)

SJS 44 (Rev. 11/04)

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE REVERSE OF THE FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS	Michelle L. Smith			DEFENDANTS	Sussex Conservation and in his official ca individually and in h	pacity and Debra	L. Absher,
(b) County of Desidence	Frient Listed Blaintiff K	ent		Courty of Bosidones o			Sussex
(b) County of Residence (E)	CEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CAS	ES)		County of Residence o	of First Listed Defendant (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF C.	***************************************	Subser
(2)					D CONDEMNATION CAS INVOLVED.	-	TION OF THE
(c) Attornev's (Firm Name.	Address, and Telenhone Number)			Attorneys (If Known)			
William D. Fletcher, Jr. Schmit Box 497, Dover, DE 19903-049		414 South State Stre	et, P.O.	Scott A. Holt, Young Floor, P.O. Box 391	g Conaway Stargatt & , Wilmington, DE 198	ε Taylor, LLP, 10 801, (302) 571-66	00 West Street 17t
II. BASIS OF JURISD	ICTION (Place an "X" in C	One Box Only)		TIZENSHIP OF P	RINCIPAL PART		
U.S. Government Plaintiff	× J 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government N	fot a Party)				and One Box ed <i>or</i> Principal Place In This State	of for Defendant) PTF DEF 4 4 4
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	(Indicate Citizenship	o of Parties in Item III)		en or Subject of a	3 Foreign Na	tion	0606
IV. NATURE OF SUIT							
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□1 Original X 2 R	tate Court A	Appellate Court	Reo	nstated or another pened (speci	fy) Liti	Iltidistrict	Appeal to District Judge from Magistrate Judgment
1.00	Cite the U.S. Civil Stat	tute under which you a	re filing	(Do not cite jurisdiction	al statutes unless diver	sity): 42 U.S.C. §	§1983
VI. CAUSE OF ACTION	Brief description of car	use: Sex Discrimin	ation; Equ	ual Protection			
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:	CHECK IF THIS UNDER F.R.C.P.	IS A CLASS ACTION 23	N D	DEMAND \$	CHECK YES JURY DEM	S only if demanded IAND: × Yes	•
VIII. RELATED CASI IF ANY	(See instructions):	JUDGE			DOCKET NUMBE	R	
DATE		SIGNATURE OF A	ITORNEY	OF RECORD			
12/2-/06			~				
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY						**************************************	
RECEIPT #A	MOUNT	APPLYING IFP		JUDGE	MA	AG JUDGE	

AO	FORM	85	RECEIPT	(REV.	9/041

United States District Court for the District of Delaware

Civil Action No. ___ 0 6 - 7 7 6

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT FOR AO FORM 85

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE TO EXERCISE JURISDICTION

I HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE REG	CEIPT OF COPIES OF AO FORM 85.	
DEC 2 0 2906		
(Date forms issued)	(Signature of Party of their Representative)	
•		
	(Printed name of Party or their Representative)	
	(Printed name of Party/or their Representative)	
·		
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Note: Completed receipt will be filed in the Civil Action		